Five Drills for Beginners at the Range

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Going to the range without a plan is like going to the gym without a plan. You show up, do some bicep curls, wander around, and ultimately make no progress. Without a plan, you're wasting ammo, time, and not learning anything. One of the easiest ways to make a plan is to turn to drills. There are many drills out there, and today, we are bringing you the five best beginner drills.

Beginner Drills – How To Plan

A drill is a shooting exercise that prescribes nearly every element of your shooting. It describes your distance, your accuracy standards, the time you have to accomplish the drill, how many rounds are fired, and more. Most importantly, it has a time and accuracy standard.

A time and accuracy standard gives you a goal to meet. If you can't meet these goals, you'll be able to identify your weaknesses and, hopefully, improve your shooting skills continually. Shooters should never dive too deep or too fast. Attempting the FAST Drill as a new shooter can be a recipe for disaster.

Have a plan, and the gear to make it work.

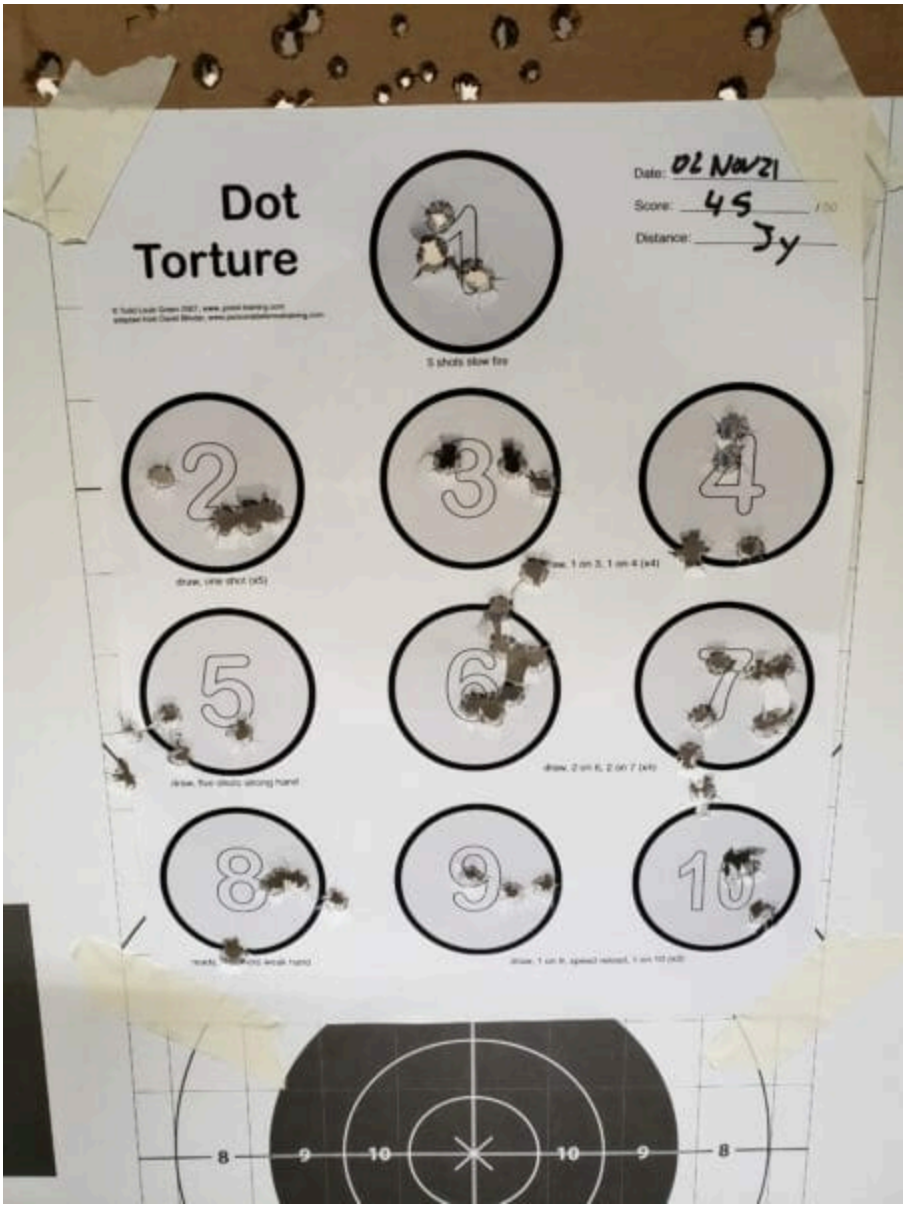
To avoid throwing new shooters into the pool's deep end and seeing if they sink or swim,, I wanted to provide five basic, safe drills. These are still challenging and provide an excellent tool to advance your shooting skills.

With that in mind, as a new shooter, it's always wise to dry these drills dry first. Dry being ammo-free, just walk through them at your pace and ensure you understand exactly what you're doing. Take your time, maintain the basics of grip, sight picture, and basic manipulations, and only go as fast as you can safely.

Dot Torture

- **Range –** 3 to 5 Yards
- **Time –** None
- **Equipment Required –** Two magazines, one magazine pouch, and a holster.
- **Ammo –** 50 rounds

Dot Torture is a training classic built around handguns and one ammo box. This drill gains its name from the target you're required to use. The target has ten 2-inch dots. The target can be printed and found easily online. Each dot has an assigned task that ranges from five shots of slow fire to drawing, reloading, and more. Dot torture isn't a single drill but a combination of several beginner drills that provide an all-around shooting workout.



One of my more recent attempts at Dot Torture

There is no time standard, and the range depends on your comfort level and skill. I always advise starting at three yards and working your way back. This can be a great way to test some basic skills in a fairly low-pressure scenario. Plus, it eats exactly fifty rounds, which is perfect for new shooters with a single box of ammo.

The 10-10-10 Drill

- **Range –** 10 Yards
- **Time –** 10 Seconds
- **Extra Equipment Required –** Shot Timer
- **Ammo –** 10 Rounds

The 10-10-10 Drill is one of my favorite beginner drills. It's a bit of a yardstick for new shooters. The drill uses a basic B8 target, which is a very traditional Bull's eye you can find anywhere or even print one at home. The name explains the entirety of the drill. You're firing ten rounds in ten seconds at ten yards.

10 rounds
at 10 yards
in 10 seconds

Your goal is to hit nothing ten on the B8 target, but that's something most people have to work towards. You'll have to find the right balance of accuracy and time, and new shooters who tend to go too fast tend to miss fast. This drill works your ability to hold a consistent grip, track your sights, and control recoil, all very important skills to master.

The Failure To Stop Drill

- **Range –** 5 to 7 Yards
- **Time –** 3 Seconds
- **Extra Equipment Required –** Shot timer
- **Ammo –** 3 rounds

The Failure to Stop Drill is one of the oldest formal shooting drills, and with age comes adaptability. The drill is insanely simple. The shooter starts in the low or high ready position, and at the beep, they shoot two rounds to the chest quickly and then fire one well-aimed headshot. Different par times have been used historically, but I like 3 seconds for beginners.

Who doesn’t love a failure drill?

This is a practical shooting drill that can be simple. You need a target with a chest and head portion. You can use any silhouette target, but I like to use a B8 for the chest and a 3×5 index card for the head. This gives you smaller targets and demands more accuracy. Being able to quickly place effective rounds on target is a critical defensive skill, and that’s what the Failure to Stop drill teaches.

Doubles Drill

- **Range –** 5 Yards
- **Time –** None
- **Extra Equipment Required –** None
- **Ammo –** 2 rounds per run

The doubles drill is a super simple drill that’s very popular with competition shooters. It requires you to fire two shots rapidly, and the goal is for those two shots to be as close as possible. You’ll start in the ready position and fire two rounds rapidly, aiming for them to be on top of each other.

Its as simple as two shots as fast as you can.

We are attempting to control recoil and get the gunight back on target after our second shot is fired. You can use anything as a target, but smaller targets demand better control. A B8 works great because I want the shots in the X ring, and I can easily measure how far off I am. Focus on your recoil control, and you'll also be exposed to firing quickly, which can be stressful, but this is a controlled effort.

The Five Shot Red Dot Drill

- **Range –** 5 Yards
- **Time –** None
- **Extra Equipment Required –** Shot Timer, extra magazine
- **Ammo –** 5 Rounds Per Run

This drill uses a red dot but can be done with iron sights. You don't have a time requirement, but you should use a shot timer to record your times to examine if you're getting quicker or slowing down. You should aim to go faster without sacrificing accuracy. Our target will be an 8-inch circle, which means you can use a B8.

This drill is built around using a red dot.

Traditionally, this is fired from the holster, but beginners should start at a low readiness. At the beep of a shot timer, you'll aim and quickly fire five rounds into the 8-inch circle. Your goal is to properly track your sights and keep all five rounds into the target. This means you'll need to exercise proper recoil control, too, another very valuable skill.

After you fire the fifth round, you'll conduct a reload and get the gun right back to the ready position. As far as beginner drills go, they are practical efforts that keep you trying to get faster and faster.

Beginner Drills and You

Beginner drills should offer very simple goals. We want to see an accuracy standard, a time standard, or both. The goals should be clear, and you should be working on specific skills. Until your skill level grows, you should avoid complicated skills like drawing, multiple positions, and even one-handed manipulations.

Drills offer clear goals that ensure you get the most from your range time.

About Travis Pike

Travis Pike is a former Marine Machine Gunner, a lifelong firearms enthusiast, and now a regular guy who likes to shoot, write, and find ways to combine the two. He holds an NRA certification as a Basic Pistol Instructor and is the world's Okayest firearm's instructor.